

The Communications Act of 1934 actively limited multiple station ownership, especially within markets. By the early 1930's it was perfectly clear what would happen if a situation like what we have now were to be permitted. The vision was of the people who drafted that act was indicative of action worthy of responsible democratic government. The public interest should indeed be the determinating factor. This approach generated a wide variety of programming available to the listening public. Now, with the exception of public radio, that variety has disappeared. The same entities who engineered the broadcast part of the Telecommunications Act of 1995 are still doing their best to eliminate the remainder of that small segment of the FM band in which the last vestiges of local programming exist. The airwaves are dominated by automated programming and by syndicated talk shows. That severely limits the benefits of the communication medium realized by the listening public. Under the rules promulgated in 1934, distinctive and varied community-based programming was strongly encouraged. Local forums were created to disseminate news and examine issues, particularly in smaller communities. Automated programming fed to all the radio markets in the country constitutes a disservice to the listening public and a complete travesty. The guiding principles of the Constitution provide for a balanced approach to governance. Where is that balance?